

## Trip Dossier for Sri Lanka – Volunteer Holiday

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Your children will probably know more than you about the Tsunami and its aftermath and will probably jump at the chance to go on a wonderful beach holiday yet give something back by helping in some local projects with people who were so desperately affected by it. As well as the positive bonding aspects of working together as a family, you will discover how other communities live and gain a fresh perspective and understanding. Inspire your children to be a force for change and good in tourism.

### Day 1 Fly to Colombo

### Day 2 Arrive Colombo; drive to Hikkaduwa

You will be met at the airport and driven by minibus to Hikkaduwa (journey time is 4 hours) your base for the next fortnight. Your friendly hotel is situated right on the beach and opposite the only marine park in Sri Lanka, so there is lots of scope for exploring the coral reef either snorkelling or in a flat-bottomed glass boat, and scuba diving is available also. For the adventurous, it also boasts one of the best surfing beaches. You will meet the project coordinator who will take you around some of the ongoing projects and discuss with you how best to spend your time. **Coral Sands Beach Hotel 12 nights, with swimming pool (breakfast)**

#### Coral Sands Hotel

Situated directly opposite the broad clean beach of Hikkaduwa, the Coral Sands Hotel has 75 en suite bedrooms, each with a beautiful view of the calm and crystal clear ocean. The rooms are air-conditioned, with a private balcony/terrace, telephone and TV on request. There is a large garden, two swimming pools and a children's pool, and the sea opposite the hotel is perfectly safe for swimming throughout the year.

### Days 3 to 13 Project work or relaxing

Each day you can choose to assist on various development projects depending on your skills base and desires. The work is not necessarily linked to what people might consider as 'post tsunami disaster projects such as house building or putting-up temporary shelters, but in supporting those who have lost their livelihood or financial support as a result of the tsunami. Other projects include meeting pre tsunami needs, particularly supporting education and welfare projects. You may be working in an orphanage, school, clinic or sports centre; your duties could include helping with gardening, painting, cleaning up rubbish, helping children learn English and so on. If you have specific skills we can design a program to incorporate them, please advise us when you book. The nature of the work and the amount of work you undertake is very flexible to suit you and your family. Whatever you decide to do you will go home with a sense of achievement and some new friends to boot!

If you wish to bring gifts or donations with you, we ask that these are donated via organised channels so that they can be given to those who need them most. We discourage visitors from passing out gifts to children on the street as this can encourage begging and cause jealousy and resentment.

There will be plenty of opportunity for you to take some time off from your projects and enjoy some local sightseeing, if you wish. Please do not feel guilty about leaving the projects – you will be helping to employ local people and to provide an income which they are desperately in need of. The Old Dutch Fort at Galle, only 20 km south, is well worth a visit, and there are plenty of boat trips on offer to visit some of the islands dotted around the coastline. You might like to take a day-trip to Yala National Park, where birds, elephants and even occasionally leopard may be spotted, or go to an inland Game Reserve to view elephants in their natural environment on an open-top jeep safari. Visit some tea and rubber plantations en route to the World Heritage city of Kandy full of extraordinary buildings. Closer to the hotel you can spend your day relaxing by the pool or on the beach, snorkelling over the coral reef or taking a flat-bottomed boat, surfing or diving. A fortnight won't be long enough!

### Day 14 Return to London

Today you will say goodbye to all your new friends and return to Colombo for your flight back to London.

*This itinerary includes our group flights from London. If you are making other flight arrangements, please refer to your Confirmation Invoice and Joining Instructions for details of the start or end of the trip. Please remember international flights and trip dates do occasionally change, so please always purchase flexible tickets.*



Each itinerary is planned many months in advance and although it is our intention to operate the itinerary as printed in the brochure and detailed here, it may be necessary to make some changes as a result of alterations to flight schedules, climatic conditions, limitations of infrastructure or other operational factors which are beyond our control. As a consequence, the order or location of overnight stops may vary from those outlined but we will always endeavour to keep you informed of any such changes. Included meals are indicated in the daily itinerary.

These excursions, if available can be arranged through your tour leader (per person cost shown below).

#### Examples of optional Extras

Habarana - elephant back ride	£20.00
Hikkaduwa National Park - glass-bottomed boat trip	£7.00
Boat trip on Madu Ganga River to visit the mangroves	£8.00
Hire a Surf board	£8 per board
A day surfing lesson	£30 per person per day

Please note these prices are a guideline only and are subject to change.

**Climate** Sri Lanka's climate is complex as there are two monsoons: the southwest monsoon (mid May-Oct) affects the southwest quarter of the island, and the northeast monsoon (Dec-Mar) affects the east coast. The best time to visit the west coast is from mid-October to mid April. In the central highlands it can rain at any time of year, but the wettest time of year is between May and October, while the southeast region sees little rain throughout the year. Due to Sri Lanka's proximity to the equator, temperatures remain constant year round, averaging high 27-29° C on the coast and around 20° C in Kandy. In higher areas nights can be chilly, even cold. Humidity is generally high everywhere, but particularly in the southwest.

#### Average monthly temperatures in Colombo

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
<b>Max °C</b>	30	31	31	31	31	29	29	29	29	29	29	29
<b>Min °C</b>	22	22	23	24	26	25	25	25	25	24	23	22
<b>Rainfall (mm)</b>	89	69	147	231	371	224	135	109	160	348	315	147

**Is this right for your family?** Your hotel is right on the beach opposite a marine park with lots of opportunities for swimming and snorkelling and also cycling. Air conditioning, gardens and two swimming pools make it a perfect family holiday destination. The volunteering projects are geared to all generations.

#### Lone Parents

Single parents or other adults travelling alone with children should be aware that some countries, including the UK, require documentation confirming that the individual has authority to travel with the minor. It is crucial that you contact the relevant country embassy for further information on exactly what may be required. These details can be found on the Foreign & Commonwealth Website under the appropriate country [www.fco.gov.uk/travel](http://www.fco.gov.uk/travel)

**Accommodation** The hotel is 3 star, modern, clean and comfortable and renowned for its friendly service. All rooms are air-conditioned have private facilities and balcony or terrace and are booked on a twin-share basis. The mention of a swimming pool at a hotel should not be taken as a guarantee but rather an indication. You should also be aware that swimming pools at the hotels are often unheated and so can be cold in the winter months or even closed.

**Food and Drink** You should allow £7-10 per person day to cover lunch and dinner. It is possible to eat cheaply in Sri Lanka, but if you choose to eat in expensive restaurants you should allow a little more. Your local tour leader will be on hand to make personal recommendations but in many cases it is best to eat in your hotel. We recommend you drink plenty of bottled water.

**Currency** The unit of currency is the Sri Lanka Rupee (SLR or Rs). At the time of writing UK £1=190Rs and US\$1=108 Rs. (Sep 2008). Sterling traveller's cheques and credit cards are readily accepted in banks, larger hotels and some souvenir shops. We recommend that you change money at the airport on arrival.

**Tipping** is a recognised part of life and although at your discretion you will be expected to reward service. Please remember that tipping should be a way for individuals to thank staff for good service. As a guideline each traveller should allow £3-4 per day to cover the tips for the local staff. Tipping in restaurants is generally around 10% of the total bill.

**Language** The official languages in Sri Lanka are Sinhala and Tamil; however English is also widely spoken.



**Security** Whilst the vast majority of travellers never experience anything untoward it is worth taking precautions particularly in urban areas. You should take sensible precautions in crowded areas such as street markets and airports, where pick-pocketing is common, and keep clear of any street disturbances. Don't wear jewellery, never leave your bags unattended, keep large amounts of money, cameras and cell phones out of sight when walking in town centres, and avoid walking in city centres after dark. Keep copies of important documents, including passports, in a separate place to the documents themselves, together with details of credit cards. Leave copies at home with a friend too. Safeguard valuables, important documents and cash and deposit them in hotel safes, where practicable.

**Time** GMT +5½ hours

### Visas/Passports

Entry visas are obtainable free of charge on arrival at Columbo airport for British nationals visiting for tourism for 30 days or less. Your passport should be valid for 6 months beyond your departure from Sri Lanka.

## Clothing & Equipment List for Sri Lanka – Volunteer Holiday

Western clothing is acceptable everywhere, but outside beach resorts Sri Lankans tend to dress conservatively. We recommend comfortable lightweight casual cotton clothing in lowland areas, and medium-weight clothing and layers for the cooler hill country. Out of respect for local culture we recommend that - particularly in rural areas - you dress accordingly i.e. no tight-fitting clothing, low-cut or sleeveless tops, etc. Shorts are OK in main tourist areas, but they (and skirts) should reach at least to the knee. Everyone should be prepared to cover bare arms and legs when entering religious buildings, and take off their shoes. Up in the hills it can get surprisingly cold, so pack some warm and windproof clothing. A sun hat, sunglasses and high-factor sunscreen are all essential.

The following list of clothing and equipment is intended to be fairly comprehensive and experienced travellers may well take a good deal less luggage than we recommend.

CLOTHING	NUMBER PER PERSON	Check	EQUIPMENT	Check
Walking shoes	1 pair		Soft-sided bag 50-80 litres	
Trainers or Strong Sandals	1 pair – all purpose wear		Lightweight Daypack – 25 litres	
Socks/underwear	4+		A variety of large plastic bags	
Waterproof Jacket	1 lightweight		Sunglasses	
T-Shirts	3 +		Personal First Aid Kit	
Long casual trousers	2 +		Large water bottle	
Short Trousers	2		Torch and Batteries	
Long Sleeve Shirt	2+		Camera and Memory Card	
Thin Fleece or Sweatshirt	1			
Swim Wear	1			
Towel or Sarong				
Sunhat / Baseball cap	Essential (styled to shade face, ears and neck)			

ITEM	Check	ITEM	Check
Passport/ Visa		Guide Book & map	
Air Tickets		Universal travelling adapter	
Money/Travellers Cheques		Toilet paper / tissues	
Cash Cards/Visa		Insect Repellent	
Insurance Documents		Sunscreen – lots of it	
Trip Information and Itinerary		Wet wipes and anti bacterial hand wash	
Money Security Belt/Pouch		Small gifts for local children	

For details regarding hand luggage restrictions please visit [www.baa.com](http://www.baa.com)

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